Are stillbirths stillborn on the global agenda?

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For *The Lancet* Stillbirth Series team

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#stillbirth
#newbornactionplan
#WD2013

MARCH
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MATERNAL
REPRODUCTIVE &
CHILD
HEALTH

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HYGIENE
&TROPICAL
MEDICINE

Are stillbirths stillborn on the global agenda?

1. Stillbirths do matter

   Findings from *The Lancet* Stillbirth Series

2. Yet stillbirths still don't count

   Hidden individual losses to global health agenda
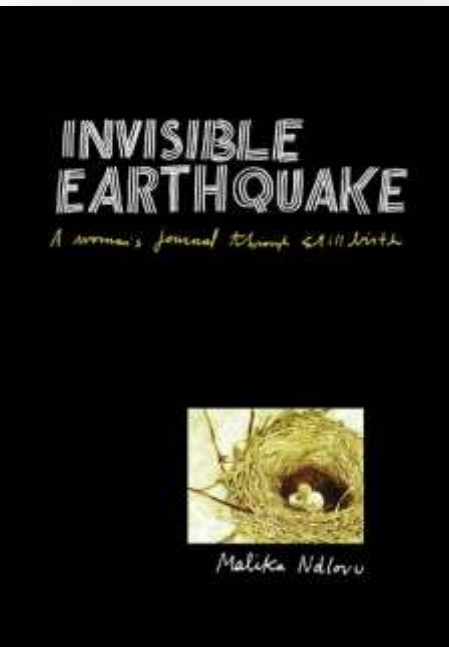
3. Why change is possible

photograph provided by SANDS

Stillbirths matter for women

"No fetal heartbeat. These three words began the surreal journey of inducing labour and finally my daughter's stillbirth... In the weeks that followed I waded through each day trying to keep my head above an ocean of sorrow. I mostly hibernated...

I just wanted to stop breathing, to stop time moving me forward..."

Malika Ndlovu

Stillbirths matter for families

Giovanni Presutti CiaoLapo

Over 7200 families a day experience a stillbirth….
Each is an individual, painful story

Whether they are famous or not, in a rich country or
poor, the grief is overwhelming, and usually
hidden

Follow up studies show that unresolved grief is
common even 20 years afterwards

Stillbirths matter globally
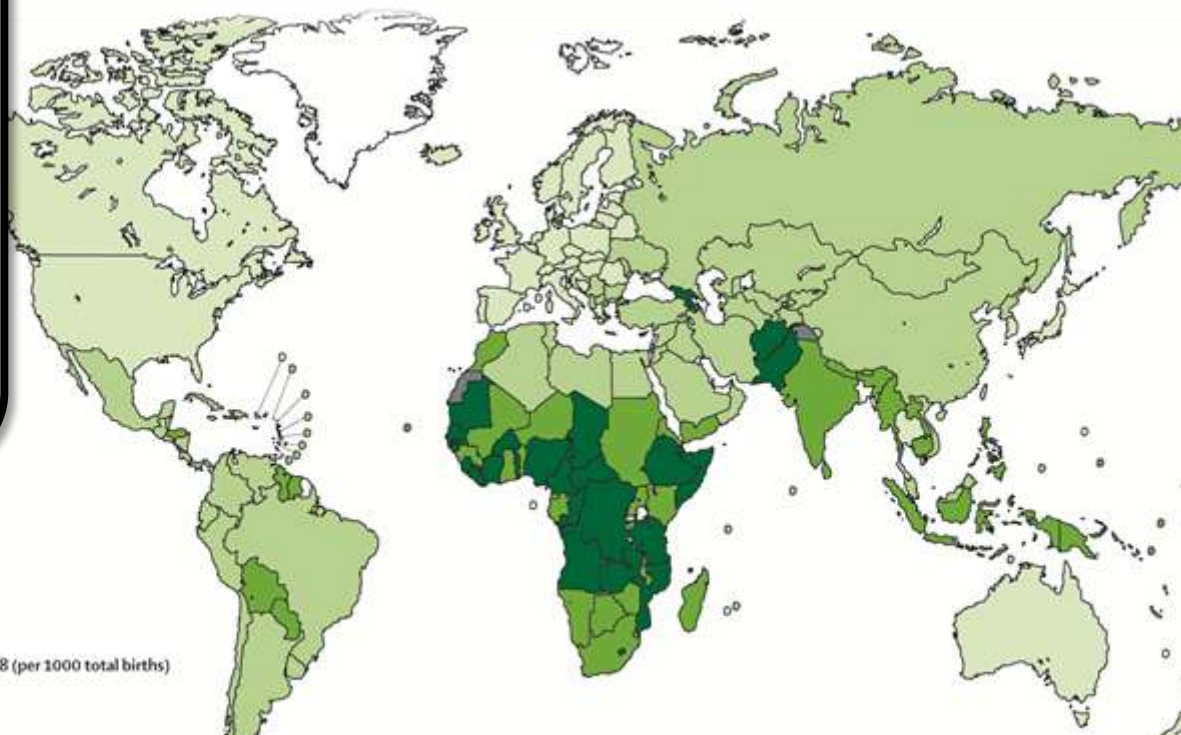
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Stillbirth rates
(deaths per 1000 livebirths)

Lowest countries
1. Finland   (2)
2. Singapore (2)

Highest countries
192. Nigeria   (42)
193. Pakistan (47)

10 countries account for 66% of the world's stillbirths – 66% of neonatal deaths and 60% of maternal deaths

1. India
2. Pakistan
3. Nigeria
4. China
5. Bangladesh
6. Dem Rep Congo
7. Ethiopia
8. Indonesia
9. Tanzania

Stillbirth rate in 2008 (per 1000 total births)
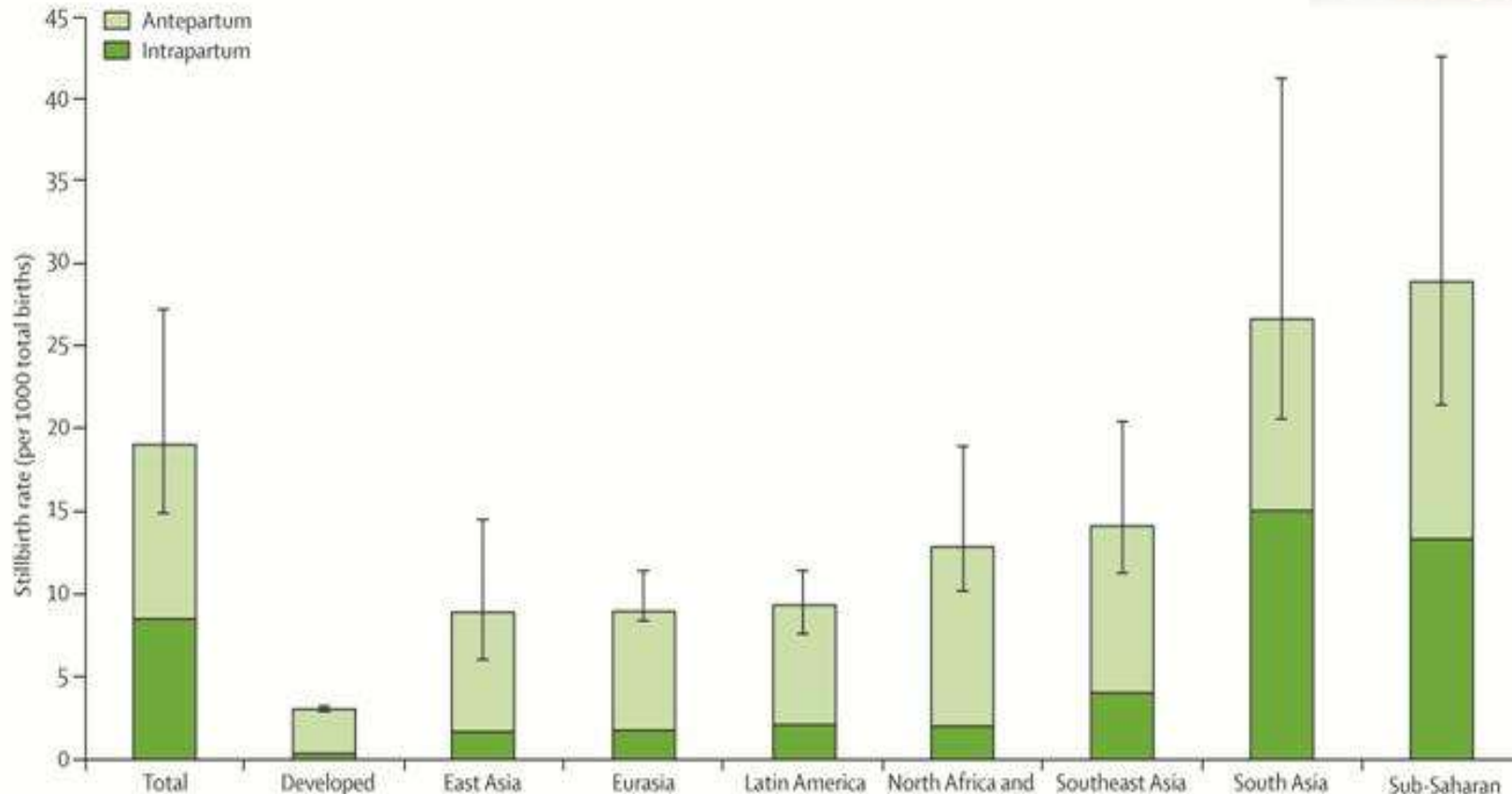- <5
- 5-14·9
- 15-24·9

2.6 million stillbirths
98% occur in low-income and middle-income countries
55% are for rural families in Africa and South Asia

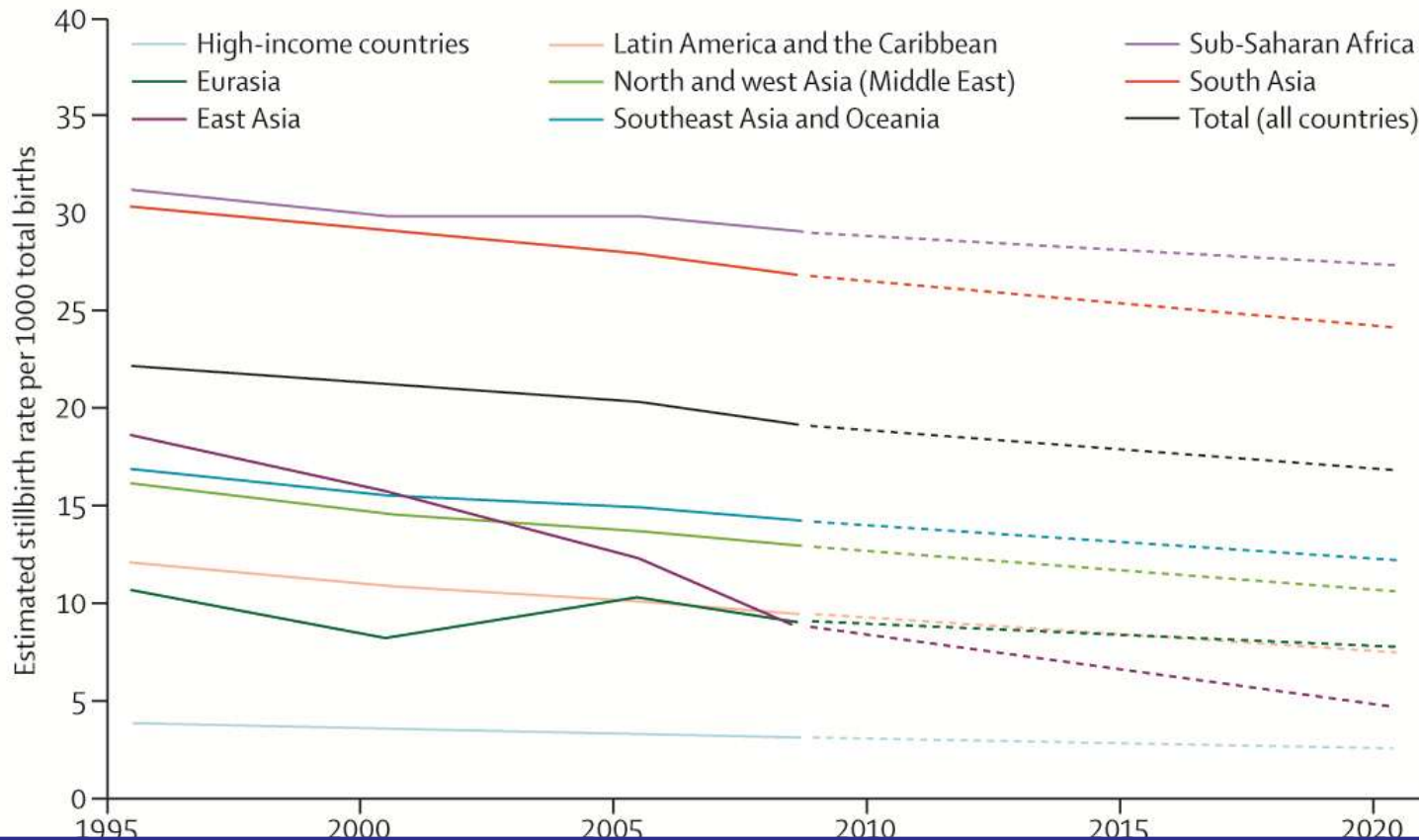# Nearly half stillborn babies were alive at the start of labour

The risk of stillbirth during labour (intrapartum) for an African women is 50 times higher than for a woman in the UK.

Things aren't changing fast enough for these babies…

THE LANCET

If the same progress continues, then by 2020 over 90% of all stillbirths will be in Africa and South Asia

Legend:
- High-income countries
- Eurasia
- East Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- North and west Asia (Middle East)
- Southeast Asia and Oceania
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- South Asia
- Total (all countries)

Y-axis: Estimated stillbirth rate per 1000 total births (0–40)
X-axis: 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020

Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the slowest rates of decline

But change is possible

THE LANCET
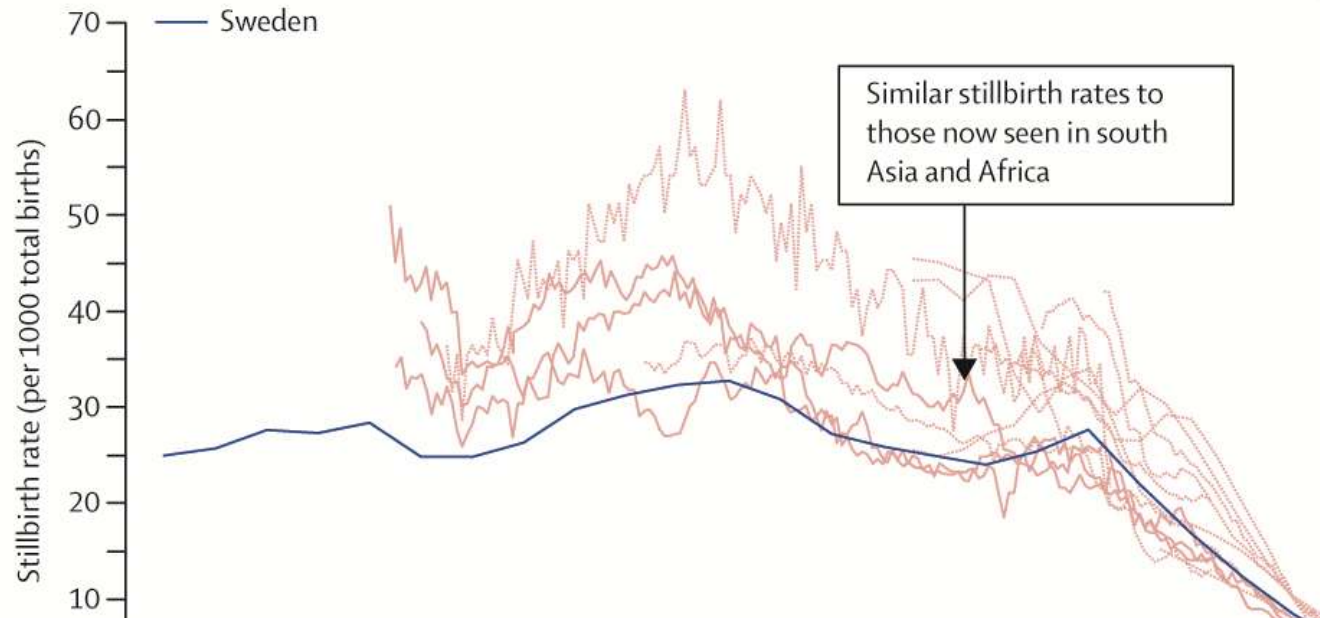
Stillbirth rates halved 1950-1975 with improvements in infection treatment and obstetric care

Colombia, Mexico and China halved their numbers of stillbirths over the past two decades

We know how to prevent stillbirths

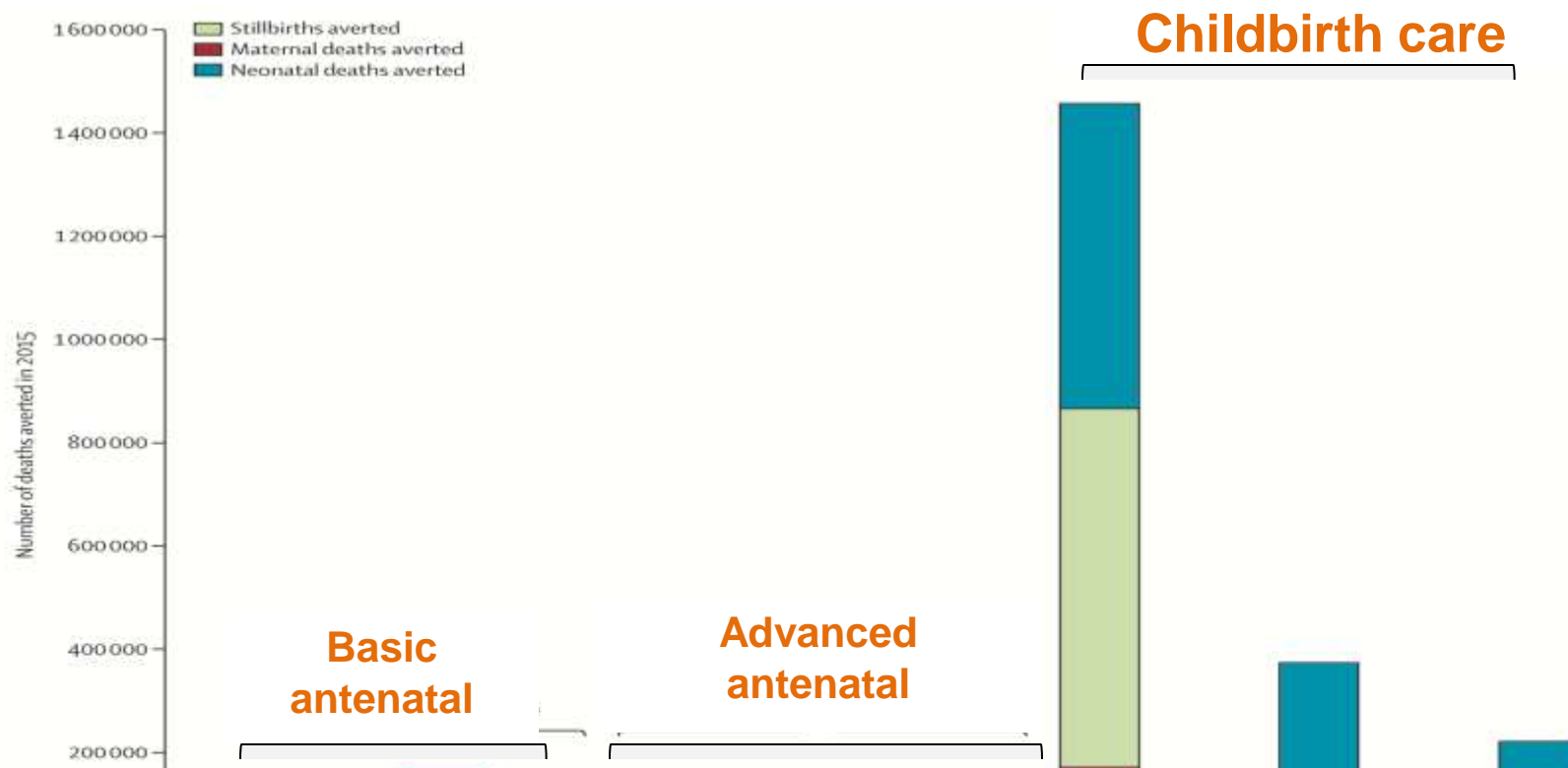|	Interventions to prevent stillbirths		Universal coverage
			Stillbirths prevented
1	Periconceptual folic acid fortification	**Basic antenatal care**	27,000
2	Malaria in pregnancy - ITNs & IPTp		35,000
3	Syphilis screening and treatment		136,000
4	Hypertensive diseases in pregnancy a	**Advanced antenatal care**	57000
5	Diabetes screening and management		24,000
6	Fetal growth restriction management		107,000
7	Induction of labor at or beyond 41 com		52,000
8,9,10	Obstetric Care (3 levels including CEn	**Childbirth care**	696,000
		Total Stillbirths Averted	1,134,000

1.1 million stillbirths could be prevented
But need higher coverage and quality of care

Childbirth care is one of the best health investments if you count women *and* babies

Childbirth care

Stillbirths averted
Maternal deaths averted
Neonatal deaths averted

Number of deaths averted in 2015

Basic antenatal

Advanced antenatal

Deaths prevented: Stillbirths 1.1 million (45%)
Newborn deaths 1.4 million (43%)
Maternal deaths 201,000 (54%)

TRIPLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Making the case for investing in MNCH is stronger if we count stillbirths

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Childbirth care cost analysis:

Cost per maternal death prevented is **US$54,350**

Counting newborns and stillbirths this becomes **$3,920** per death prevented

In 68 priority countries (including 92% of all stillbirths):

Total additional running cost of **US$ 2.32** per person per year

for universal coverage with:

10 interventions for women, newborns <u>and</u> stillbirths

plus 5 <u>maternal and newborn specific</u> interventions

Affordable given results of 2.7 million lives saved

Investment in maternal health should count the full effect

2. Yet stillbirths don't count …

Hidden Individual Loss of Stillbirths

Stillborn babies do not get societal recognition - rarely named, funeral rites or held, dressed by the mother.

One in four stillbirths is not seen by either the mother or her family.

Nearly one third of stillbirths are attributed to the mother's sins or evil spirits.

Many people believe that stillbirth is a natural selection process and that the baby was not destined to live.

B   The mother will never or rarely hold and dress her stillborn baby
100% 0%   No data

B   The mother has always or often failed as a mother
41% 0%   No data
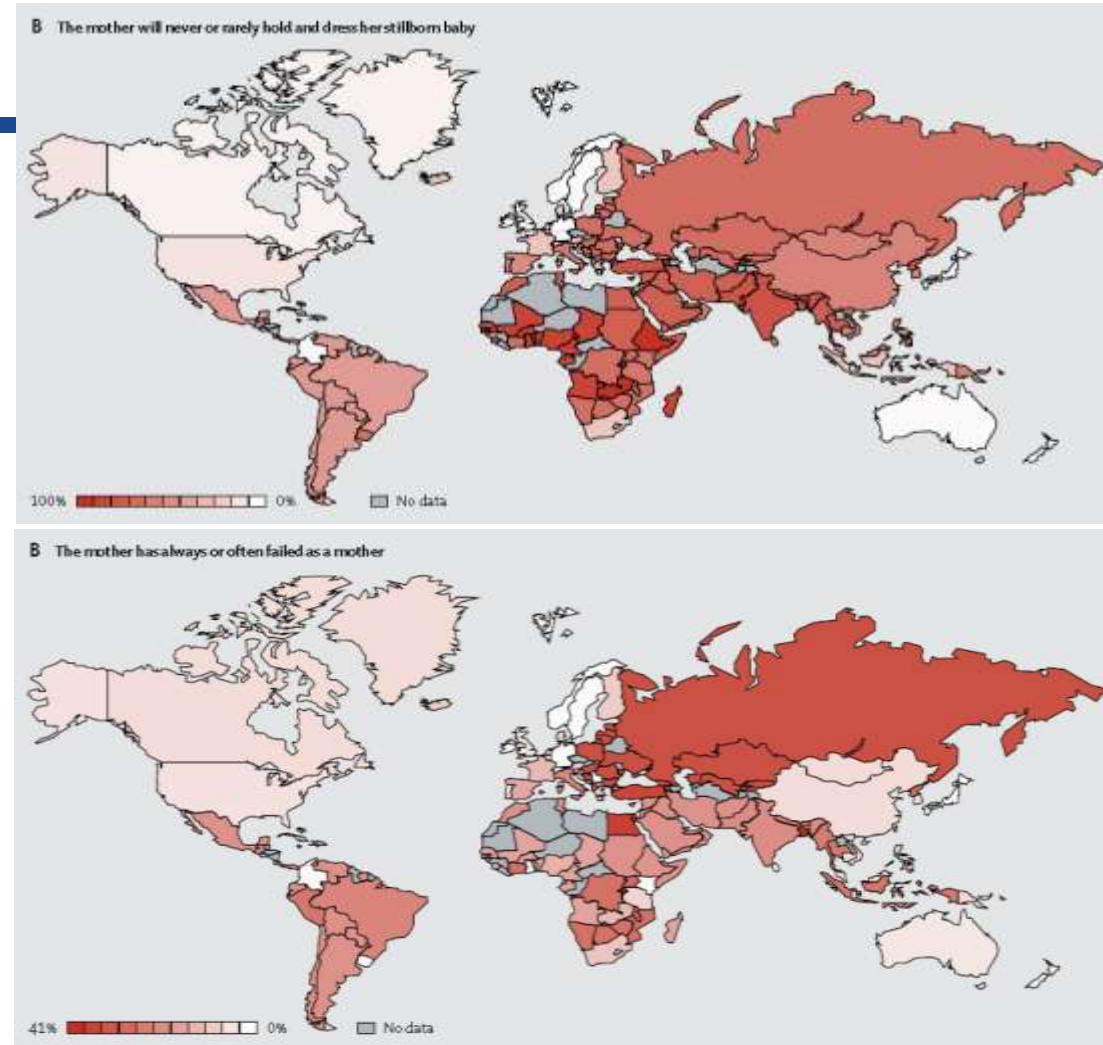
Source: Frøen JF, Cacciatore J, McClure EM, et al, for The Lancet's Stillbirths Series steering committee. Stillbirths: why they matter. Lancet 2011; published online April 14. DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)62232-5.

Invisible in global data and policy

1. **Global data**

   NOT routinely reported to World Health Organization

   NOT included in the Global Burden of Disease metrics

   NOT measured appropriately in most national surveys

2. **Global goals**

   Stillbirths NOT counted in the MDGs although intimately linked to:

   – Maternal health in MDG 5

   – Neonatal deaths, accounting for 43% of child deaths in MDG4

   – Poverty (MDG 1) and girls education (MDG2)

Stillbirths are still missing in national and international health policy and programmes

**Post MDG Consultation > 400 submissions
the word newborn came once, stillbirth no times.**

Invisible in MNCH donor funding
68 Countdown priority countries 2003-2008

Millions USD (constant 2008)

6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000

Child health projects

Maternal health projects

Child donor projects with reference to newborn

MNCH donor projects exclusively benefiting newborns 3.6 million

Maternal donor projects with reference to newborn
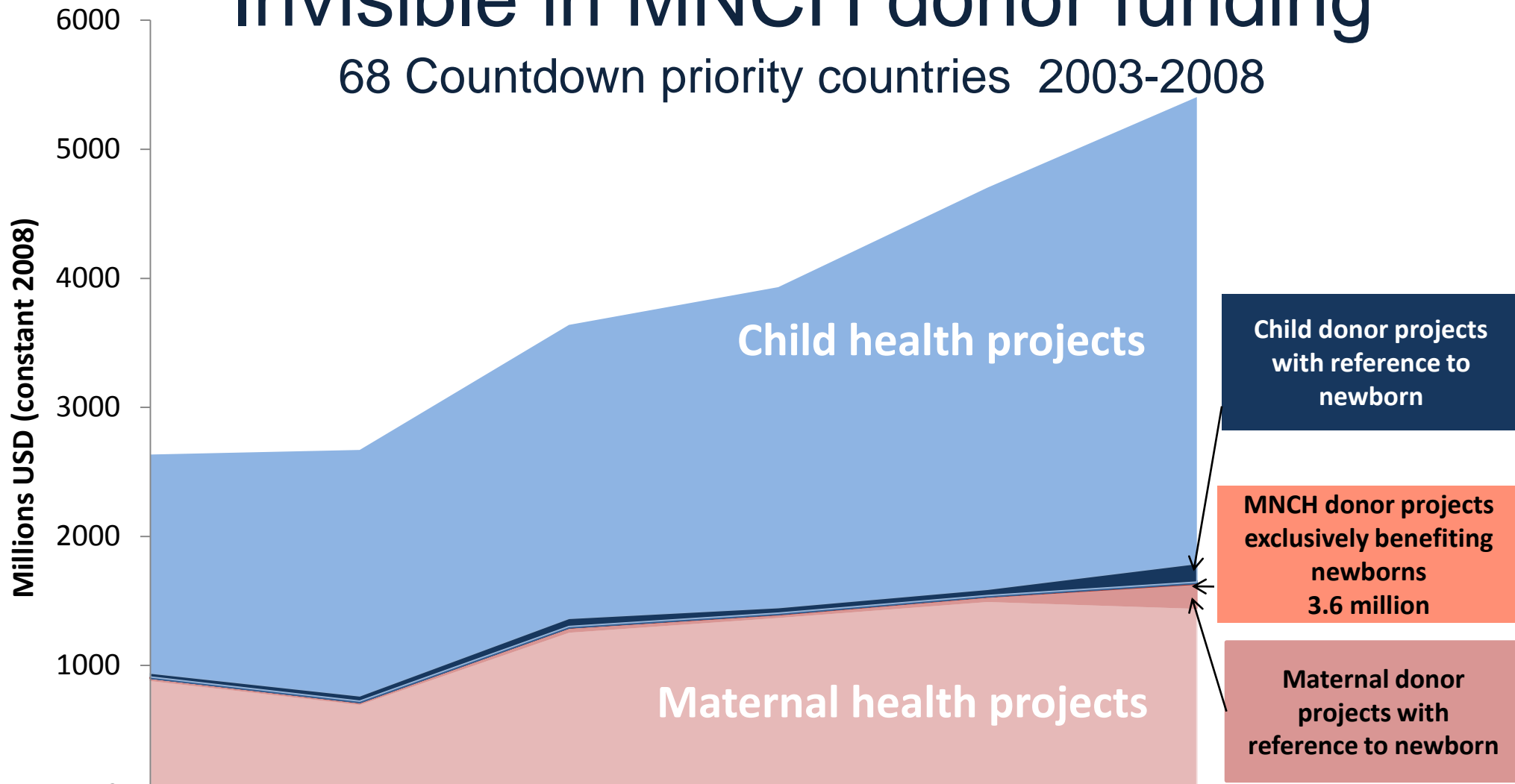
Out of ~ 250,000 donor disbursements only 2 mention stillbirth

ODA disbursement for MNCH doubled but in 2008 just 6% of MNCH funding mentioned "newborn"

3. Why change is possible for stillbirths

1. We have data and solutions

THE LANCET

April 14, 2011   www.thelancet.com

Stillbirths

An Executive Summary for The Lancet's Series

"Millions of families experience stillbirth, yet these deaths remain uncounted, unsupported, and the solutions understudied. Better counting of stillbirths alongside maternal and neonatal deaths and strategic programmatic action will make stillbirths count."

2011 – Lancet Stillbirth series	Cites
Stillbirth rate estimates for 193 countries	115
Risk Factors for stillbirth in high income countries	111
1. Invisibility of stillbirth: Making the unseen seen	44
2. Counting stillbirths: Where? When? Why?	83
3. Interventions: Evidence on what works	43
4. Implementation: Integrated care has triple benefit	34
5. High-income settings: Priority actions	70
6. 2020 vision: Goals and research priorities	32

Stillbirths Matter

2. Families voices are being heard

international *stillbirth* alliance

First Candle · Helping Babies Survive & Thrive ·

CiaoLapo
www.ciaolapo.it

FACES OF LOSS, FACES OF HOPE

Sands
Stillbirth & neonatal death charity

stillbirth FOUNDATION australia

Born in silence: Parents draw attention to stillborn babies
By Rose Egge | Published: Jan 30, 2013 at 10:43 AM PDT | Last Updated: Apr 26, 2013 at 1:43 PM PDT

"Thank you for listening to us. Now I have hope that others who loose their children like this in India can know they count"

Indian Engineer, father of 3, two of them stillborn babies

Stillbirths Matter

3. Media and general public do care

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Launches in 7 cities

London
New York
Hobart
Geneva
Florence, Italy
Cape Town
New Delhi

BBC Mobile | News | Sport | Weather | Tr

NEWS HEALTH

14 April 2011 Last updated at 08:01 GMT

UK stillbirth rates among highest of rich nations

By Neil Bowdler
Science reporter, BBC News

THE GLOBE AND MAIL   Search: New | Quote | Web | Businesses | People

Stillbirth epidemic claims more lives each year than HIV-AIDS and malaria combined

ANDRÉ PICARD   Columnist profile   E-mail
From Thursday's Globe and Mail
Published Wednesday, Apr. 13, 2011 8:01PM EDT
Last updated Thursday, Apr. 14, 2011 7:20AM EDT

guardian.co.uk

Mail Online

'National scandal' of 11 stillbirths a day means Britain has one of worst survival rates

By JENNY HOPE
Last updated at 11:37 AM on 14th April 2011

- UK ranked 33rd in world league table on par with Belarus
- Women in Midlands most at risk of having stillbirths

The Washington Post

NATIONAL

Global stillbirths: 2.6 million a year, overlooked and often preventable

By David Brown, Wednesday, April 13, 10:41 PM

About 2.6 million babies are born dead each year, a largely ignored and silently grieved

"These papers, like no other *Lancet* Series before, have triggered a remarkable response not just from academia and organisations, but also from the public."
Richard Horton   *Lancet editorial one month after*

4. Professional organisations are ready to lead the change

"We believe that FIGO, IPA and ICM have a major part to play in saving the lives of millions of stillborn babies worldwide, especially in developing countries"

G Serour, S Carbral, B Lynch
The Lancet, 2011

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Cell +27 (0) 798839706 (note new number now works when travelling)
Email: joylawn@yahoo.co.uk

Cairo 25th May, 2010

Dear Dr. Lawn,

Thank you very much for your email. Most sincere congratulations on the huge success of this Lancet series of SB articles, which I believe is becoming a landmark within MNCH.

We at FIGO are delighted to have been engaged in this task. The SB message has already been uploaded on the FIGO website. The topic of SB is on the agenda of the coming FIGO EB due to be held during the period June 12-13, 2011 in MEXICO. FIGO is having a session at ICM in Durban and I am highlighting SB in my

Goal by 2020

- Countries with a current stillbirth rate of more than 5 per 1000 births to reduce their stillbirth rates by at least 50% from the 2008 rates

- Countries with a current stillbirth rate of less than 5 per 1000 births to eliminate all preventable stillbirths and close equity gaps

Source: Goldenberg RL, McClure EM, Bhutta ZA, et al, for The Lancet's Stillbirths Series steering committee. Stillbirths: the vision for 2020. *Lancet* 2011; published online April 14. DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)62235-0.

The key issue is a void of ownership

- In global newborn survival efforts, attention to stillbirths remains limited.

- In global efforts for maternal health, the woman's aspiration of a live baby is not a major focus.

- No one professional organisation group see that stillbirths "belong" to them and risks being left out by all.

- Parental groups are powerful, yet few countries have parent groups and strong champions, almost non-existent in low income

**Key opportunities include
Promise Renewed for Preventable Maternal Deaths
the Global Newborn Action Plan and
Return to Zero film**

Based on a true story.
RETURN TO ZERO
Three minus one equals zero.
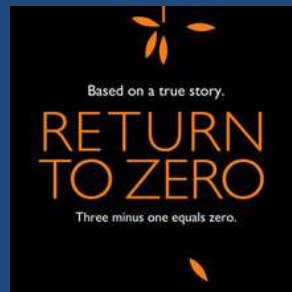
Let's make it different

- Stillbirths count for women and families:
  - ~ A 'silent cry' that is never forgotten

- We know what works:
  - ~ Countries all over world can reduce stillbirths

- Counting stillbirths increases the case for investing in care around the time of birth:
  - ~ A triple return on investment

We all have a role to play ….
Will we raise our voices and raise up our hands
to speak and act for these women and their stillborn babies?
Stillbirths Matter